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Prescribed burning has become of major importance to the multiresource management of the southern pine forest. Fire is used periodically in the life of pine stands to manipulate understory vegetation and to reduce the risk of wildlife by controlling litter build-up. Although prescribed fires partially consume important components of the pine forest ecosystem, the fires have limited effects on soils, nutrient cycles, and hydrologic systems. See page 661. [Daniel H. Gelbert & Associates, Forestry Consultants, Durham, North Carolina]